

Message Text

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ACTION PRS-01

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 EA-13 PM-03 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 NSC-10 NSCE-00 RSR-01 /054 W

----- 064842

R 111135Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECDEF WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 2542

INFO USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 8339

LIMDIS

USIA FOR IEA

SECDEF FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FRIEDHEIM FROM
AMBASSADOR SWANK

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJ: AIRA AND PRESS ON BOMBING INCIDENTS

1. I WOULD LIKE TO CLEAR UP ANY POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE OUR AIR ATTACHE COLONEL OPFER PLAYED IN BRIEFING THE PRESS ON THE BOMBING ACCIDENT AT NEAK LUONG. HE WAS ASKED BY THE CHARGE TO BACK UP THE PAO IN BRIEFING A VERY DEMANDING AND HOSTILE PRESS CORPS ON THE EVENING OF AUGUST 6 (A) ONLY AFTER RECEIPT OF SECSTATE 154257/061333Z AUG 73 FLASH WHICH INFORMED US THAT QTE STATE AND DOD AGREE EMBASSY SHOULD BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE RE ITS ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGE, INJURIES AND NUMBER OF LIVES LOST UNQTE AND (B) BECAUSE HE WAS AT THAT TIME OUR ONLY EYEWITNESS TO THE DESTRUCTION AT NEAK LUONG. HE GAVE AN OBJECTIVE APPRAISAL OF WHAT HE SAW.

2. THE NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT'S ACCUSATION
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THAT THE AIR ATTACHE OFFICE ATTEMPTED TO BLOCK

JOURNALISTS' ACCESS TO NEAK LUONG HAS BEEN DISCUSSED
IN DAO 1148/091102Z AUG 73 AND I NEED ONLY ADD HERE
THAT MANY MEMBERS OF THE MISSION HAVE SUFFERED FROM
SUCH DISTORTIONS ON THE PART OF THE PRESS CORPS, WHICH IS
ACUTELY AWARE OF THE HEADLINES THEY CAN
COMMAND WITH SUCH STORIES.

3. PRESS REPORTS THAT THE EMBASSY HAD CONFIRMED A THIRD
BOMBING INCIDENT WAS A COMPLETE DISTORTION OF A REMARK
MADE BY THE PAO.

4. IN SHORT, COLONEL OPFER HAS DONE WELL IN TRYING
CIRCUMSTANCES. WE HAVE IN THE PAST AND WILL EVEN
MORE SO IN THE FUTURE ATTEMPT TO PROTECT OUR
ATTACHES FROM CONTACT WITH THE PRESS. RARE OCCASIONS
MAY ARISE, HOWEVER, WHEN THEY WILL BE CALLED UPON.
SWANK

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Message Attributes

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